

Transport Policy for Social Care and Support

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Introduction

Why have a transport policy?

The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair and consistent approach to the provision of transport by Warwickshire County Council Social Care and Support. The policy describes how transport may be provided for customers with care and support needs.

Social Care practitioners will use this policy to determine whether the council will provide support with transport for people who have care and support needs.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that people are able to travel to the places that matter to them as effectively and as safely as possible.

The policy applies to adults aged 18 years and above who require support to access necessary facilities within their communities. This policy does not cover travel assistance for customers under the age of 25 who need assistance to travel to and from educational establishments. The separate Home to School / College Transport Policy is located on the 'School transport' page of the Warwickshire County Council website: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schooltransport>

The Policy

1. Legal framework

The Care Act 2014 and associated Regulations and statutory guidance provide the legal framework for the assessment of social care and support needs.

Transport will be considered as part of a broader assessment of needs based on the national eligibility criteria for adults and carers; and on the duty to meet needs through a Support Plan.

2. The aims of this policy

Warwickshire County Council uses a strengths-based approach to meeting the transport needs of people who are eligible for support. This means we will promote safe and independent travel using the person's own strengths and community resources wherever possible. Where someone can get to a service or source of support themselves, we will expect them to do so and will support them to achieve this. This might be by walking, cycling, using public transport or their own vehicle.

We will provide support for people who cannot travel independently due to disability or health problems so that they can make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community.

During social care needs assessments and support planning, all relevant transport options will be considered, and assisted transport will be offered where it is appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the customer.

This policy aims to ensure a fair and transparent approach to meeting customers' transport needs identified in the Support Plan, after all other suitable alternatives have been explored and exhausted.

Where an assessment determines that the customer has care and support needs and as a result has no other travel option available, the council will provide support so that they can access necessary facilities and services in the local community.

3. Eligibility criteria for assisted transport

All social care services are subject to eligibility criteria following a social care assessment or review. Where possible, Warwickshire County Council will support customers to maximise the resources available to them, including community services and benefits. The council will, if required, consider all transport options. If these are felt to be unsuitable, the provision of assisted transport by the council can be considered using the following guidance:

Transport may be provided where:

- there are specific health and safety reasons which mean specialised transport arrangements may be necessary.
- the customer is unable to access services without supervision or support.
- the mobility element of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, if applicable, is being fully utilised to support the customer's transport needs to and from community activities.
- the customer has no access to transport and cannot mobilise, use assisted mobility (wheelchair/aids) or use public transport.
- the customer cannot attend their nearest community activity or day opportunity, because there is no placement available or their culturally specific needs cannot be met, and all other options have been explored and exhausted. (This may be on a temporary basis until an appropriate place is found nearer to home).

4. Assessment and review of need

The decision to offer transport will ultimately be dependent upon the needs of the individual as assessed by the social care professional. These will be reflected within the assessment, support plan and/or review documentation. This process will also take into consideration the potential impact of the decision on carers and family members.

A customer's assessment, support plan and/or review will focus on the strengths and resources of each individual. The focus of the Support Plan will ensure a customer's skills are maximised, and independence is attained wherever possible.

Entitlement to assisted transport does not automatically mean that the customer will have a requirement to be escorted on their journey. This will need to be considered as part of the individual assessment and support planning processes. As part of this assessment, practitioners should assess the potential health and safety risks to the customer, carers and to other customers.

Where a customer is accustomed to assisted travel, this will not be a criterion for the continuation of such provision. Where a review has taken place and a change in need or circumstance has been identified, transitional plans will be put in place to ensure any risks are managed and access to a service is maintained while any changes are implemented.

5. Charging Social Care and Support customers for transport

All assisted transport provided, or arranged, by Warwickshire County Council is subject to a charge. The charge will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial assessments will be used to determine any proportion of transport charges that individual customers may be liable for.

6. Appeals and complaints procedure

Any customer who is not satisfied with the council's decision in relation to transport or the service provided, should in the first instance talk to their allocated practitioner. Should the customer remain dissatisfied, they may use the council's complaints procedure, details of which can be found on the Warwickshire County Council website <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/customer-service/complaints-appeals-feedback> .